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Capturing the WIIFMs: a citizen handbook tool for influencing public perception of dam removal and fish passage projects

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Capturing the WIIFMs:



a citizen handbook tool for
influencing public perception of dam
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Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy, AICP



American Rivers
Rivers Connect Us



American Rivers

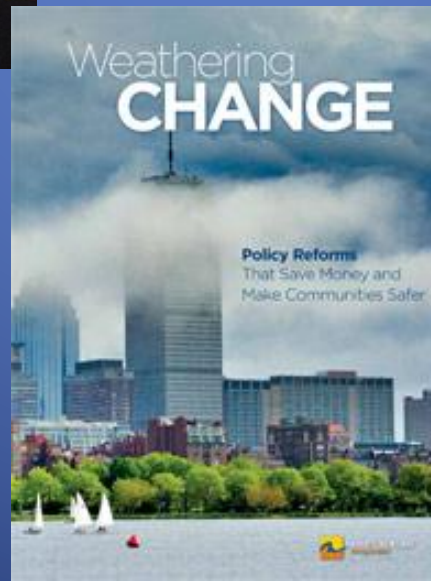


American Rivers
protects wild rivers,
restores damaged
rivers, and conserves
clean water for people
and nature.



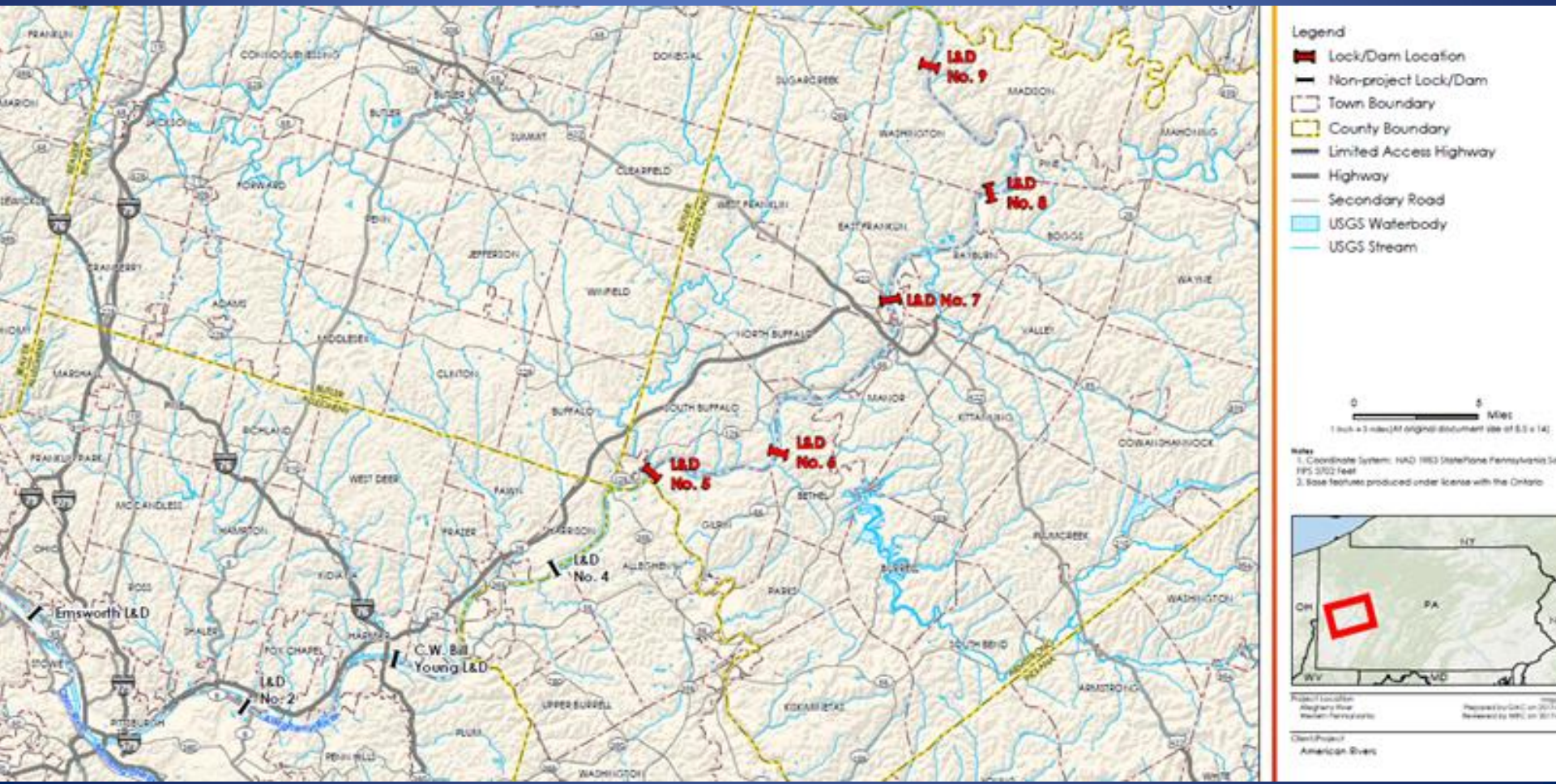
Bringing a River Back to Life

The world's biggest dam removal began September 17. Follow the restoration of the Elwha River and other rivers nationwide. [Learn more »](#)



www.americanrivers.org

The problem: obsolete, maintenance-deferred, not meeting federal purpose

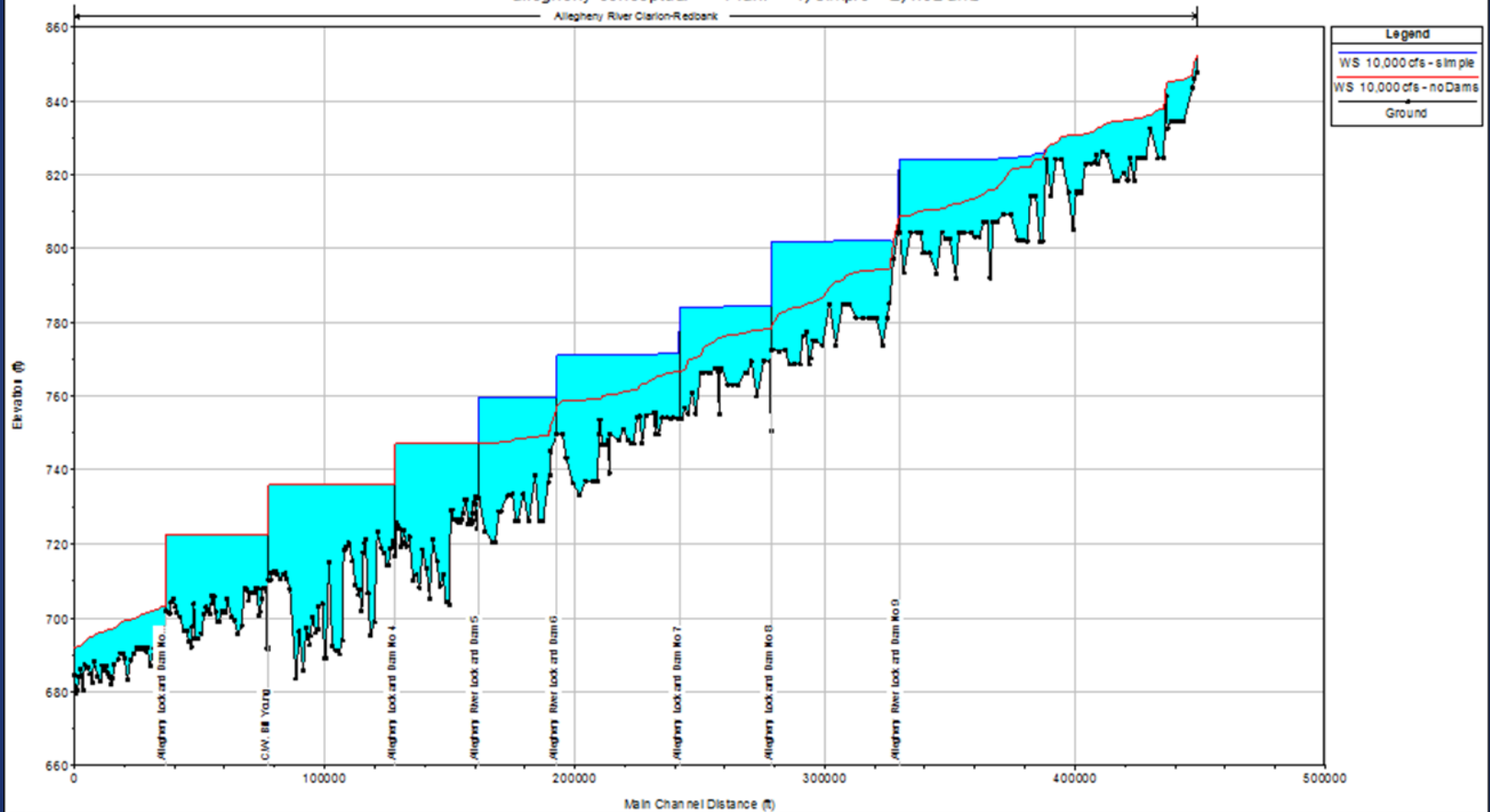




Allegheny River Lock & Dam 6

allegheny-conceptual Plan: 1) simple 2) noDams

Allegheny River Clarion-Redbank



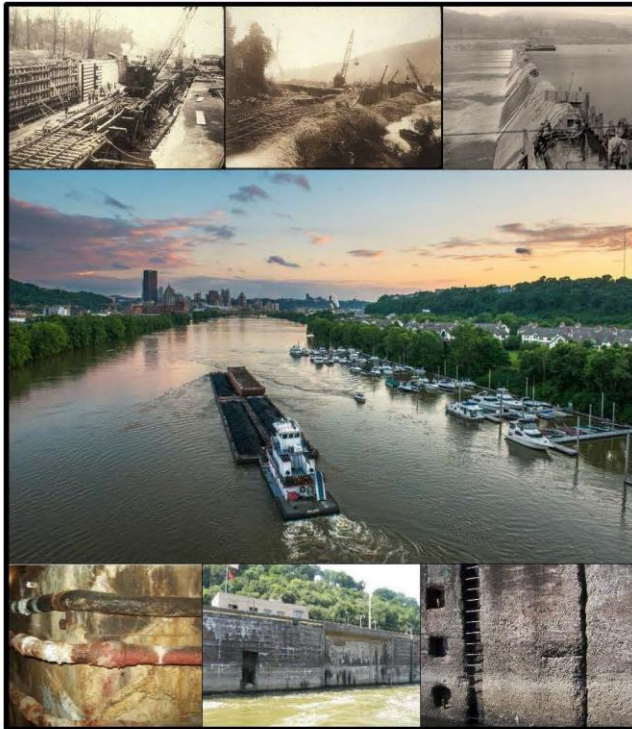


**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Pittsburgh District

MAY 2018

UPPER ALLEGHENY RIVER STUDY
LOCKS AND DAMS 5, 6, 7, 8, AND 9
ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Completed Under Section 216 of the River and Harbor Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-611)
Disposition of Completed Works



Scenarios

1. Acceptable partner
2. Status Quo
3. Restore river connectivity

An aerial photograph of a wide river flowing through a landscape with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. A dam or weir structure is visible in the lower center of the frame, with water cascading over it. The background shows a distant city skyline under a clear sky.

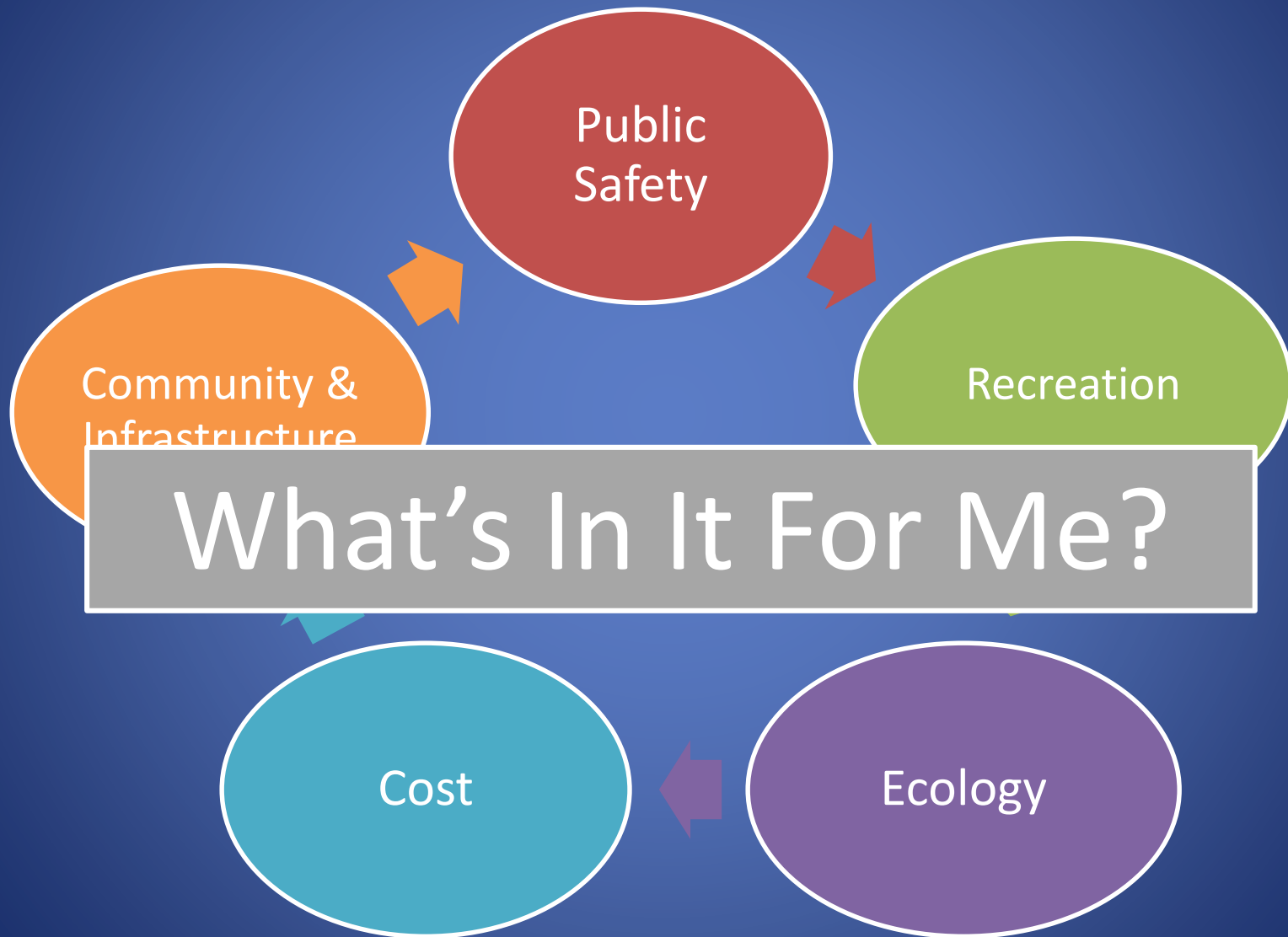
Issues

1. Benefit-cost
2. Non-dependent infrastructure
3. Shift in recreation
4. Slow-motion failure
5. Aquatic habitat
6. WRDA Authorization





Issues people care about





WIIFM



Status Quo

Slow-motion
failure

Damage to non-
dependent
infrastructure

Lowhead dams
are drowning
machines



Dams Removed

Eliminate public
safety hazard

Avoid
infrastructure
damage

Planned removal
takes advantage of
optimal conditions

Green River L&D 6

Uncontrolled Loss of Pool





Recreation

WIIFM



Status Quo

Private party
seasonal lock
operation not
sustainable

Lock failure =
disconnected pools

Missed opportunity
for expanded
recreation access



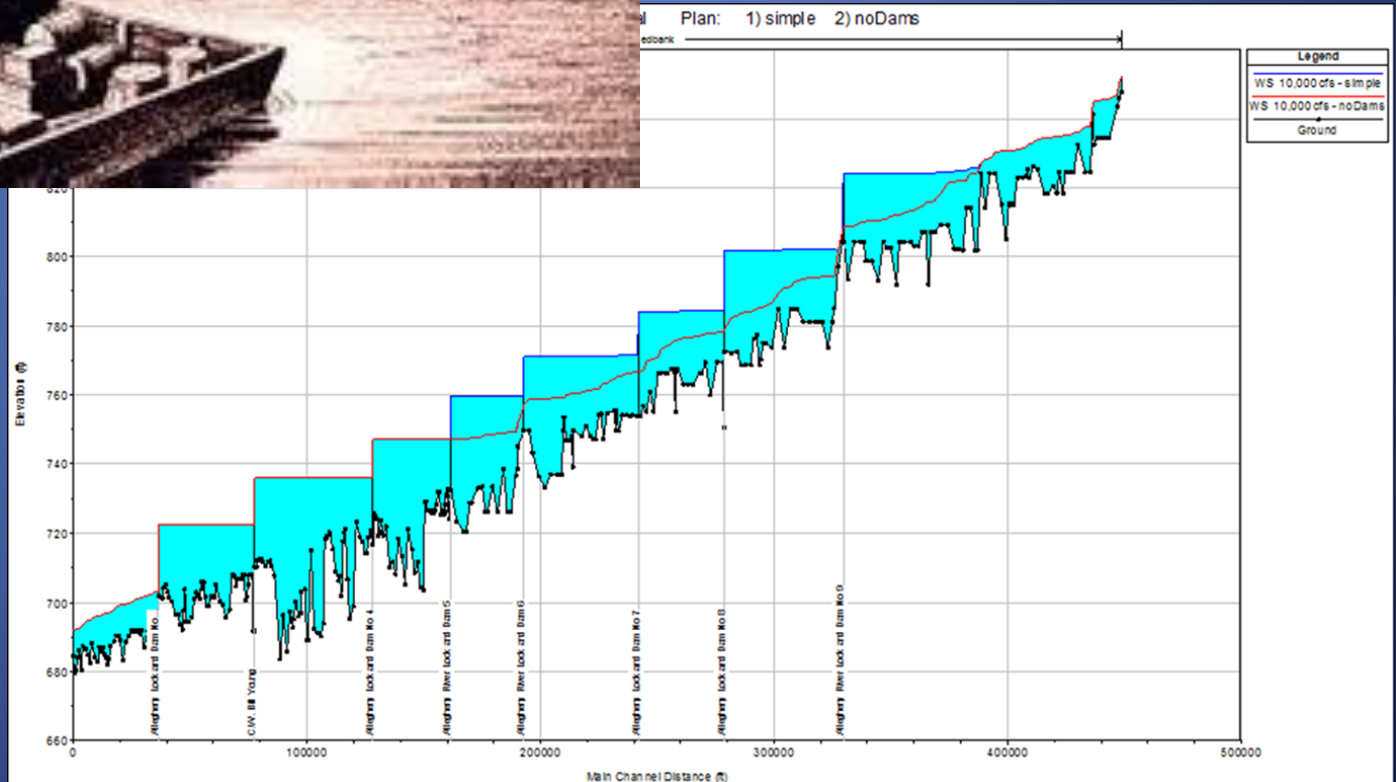
Dams Removed

Access for motorized
boating and paddling

Water trail
connection

Riverfront and access
improvements

1802 Allegheny Navigator



Economic Valuation of Water Trails (River Mgt Society, 2015)

Northern Forest Canoe
Trail (NY, VT, NH, ME, QC)
740 miles @ \$12 M/yr

Huron River Water Trail
104 miles @ \$50 M/yr

PA Recreation Water Trails
(Schuylkill, Susquehanna,
Juniata, Three Rivers)
489 mi @ ~\$1M/yr











Community &
Infrastructure

WIIFM



Status Quo

Water intakes are vulnerable to sudden loss of pool

Water, sewer, and gas lines are vulnerable

Road and railroad impacts



Dams Removed

Reconfigured water intakes will be more resilient

Infrastructure can be protected or relocated during dam removal



Ecology

WIIFM



Status Quo

Species of
Greatest
Conservation
Need are excluded
from important
habitat

DO and thermal
profile impacts



Dams Removed

Species have access

Water quality
improved

More natural flow
conditions

Biodiversity
protected and
enhanced

Species of Greatest Conservation Need





WIIFM



Status Quo

Recapitalization
estimated ~ \$40
million per
structure

Caretaker status
= slow-motion
failure



Dams Removed

Estimated \$5-\$10
million per
structure

2018 WRDA allows
USACE to eliminate
their water
infrastructure

Allegheny River Citizens' Handbook

ISSUE 1: Recreational Access

The Allegheny River serves as a place of recreation for residents and tourists of the area. Fishing, boating and recreation at riverside parks are all susceptible to the possible negative effects of a failed dam.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES



Motorized
Boating

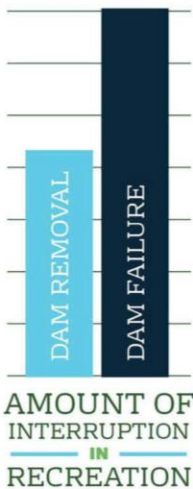


Paddle
Sports



Riverside
Recreation

IF THE DAM REMAINS IN ITS CURRENT STATE



DAM FAILURE
— INTERFERES WITH —
RECREATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES

ABANDONED LOCKS
— MAKE —
UNSAFE DAMS
— CAUSING —
DANGEROUS CONDITIONS
FOR
RIVER USERS



IF THE DAM UNDERGOES REMOVAL



IMPROVED FISHERIES
— LEAD TO —
BETTER FISHING & ANGLING

SAFE, PLANNED
DAM REMOVAL
— CAN OCCUR WITH —
MINIMAL
INTERRUPTION
TO RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES



7,500+
ACRES
— OF —
FLATWATER
BOATING
ACCESS
— WITHIN A —
45 MILE
RADIUS

Target Audiences

- Pittsburgh District USACE
- NGO partners
- River interest groups
- Business interest groups
- Tourism interest groups
- Local governments
- Water purveyors
- Individuals



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